



Stateline

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Time to Reform Colorado's No-Fault Insurance Law

by Governor Bill Owens

The skyrocketing cost of auto insurance is a problem facing every Coloradan. If you have teenage drivers in your family, as I do, then you are even more aware of the expense involved.

Here are the facts. Colorado's insurance rates, which ranked 35th in the nation ten years ago, now are eighth highest. In 2002, premium hikes averaged as much as 20%- more than double the national average.

A major priority at the state legislature this year must be to make auto insurance more accessible and affordable. The bottom line is that Colorado's no-fault insurance law expires this year and I will not approve an extension of the existing system.

In its purest form, no-fault should discourage lawsuits and fraud by requiring each individual's insurance company to pay personal injury claims, regardless of fault. But over the years, Colorado's no-fault law has become contaminated. Drivers can collect medical expenses from their own insurance company and – after reaching a very low dollar threshold – still sue the other driver. This so called “double dipping” comes at the consumers' expense. We have combined the worst aspects of no-fault and a traditional tort system, and spiraling costs are the result.

Fortunately, leaders in Colorado's business, health care and auto insurance industries have been working for several months on legislation that will dramatically reform Colorado's no-fault system. I commend them for their efforts and urge that their suggestions to be considered. One example: We should insist on citizens citing specific injuries resulting from an auto accident before they can go to court.

I prefer that we have substantive reform of our no-fault law. However, if that does not occur, I will simply allow our law to revert to the traditional tort system that is seen in the majority of States that typically enjoy lower auto insurance premiums than Colorado. Either way, I believe that this is the year we finally will stem the tide of skyrocketing auto insurance rates.

GOVERNOR'S SECOND TERM BRINGS CHANGES TO DEPARTMENT HEADS

BY JULIE POSTLETHWAIT, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, DPA

The new year has brought changes to Governor Owens' cabinet, the first of which is the move of M. Michael Cooke to take over the Department of Revenue (DOR) from retiring Executive Director Fred Fisher. Cooke is no stranger to running a large department for the State, as she has served as Executive Director of the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), since January 1999.



M. Michael Cooke
Executive Director, DOR

“The Governor gave me a great opportunity four years ago when he offered me a position at the Department of Regulatory Agencies. I see this new challenge as a continuation of that opportunity and look forward to serving the citizens of Colorado as Executive Director of Revenue,” Cooke said.

DOR provides a wide range of services to Colorado's citizens including driver's licensing, vehicle title and registration, and tax collection. Revenue is also responsible for the regulation of 450,000 licensed professionals and business entities in Colorado. The department also oversees the Colorado Lottery and is responsible for the licensing and enforcement of horse and greyhound racing, sales of liquor and tobacco and limited gaming.

“Michael Cooke's knowledge and skills are an ideal match for managing the Revenue Department,” said Governor Owens. “She knows local government but, most importantly, she knows Colorado and the needs of Colorado's citizens.”

Cooke is a fourth generation Coloradan who received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Denver, and holds an Academic Certificate in Public Policy and Administration from the University of Colorado at Denver. She is currently enrolled in the Business Management Certificate Program at Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver.

To fill the position Cooke left at DORA, Governor Owens appointed Rick O'Donnell. In addition, O'Donnell will continue leading the Governor's Office of Policy and Initiatives, where he has served since 1999. As director of OPD, O'Donnell helps develop and coordinate the Governor's agenda, including public education reform, smart growth, strengthening families, and tax relief.

“It has been an honor to serve in Governor Owens' administration for the first four years and I am looking forward to these new challenges. I appreciate the Governor's confidence and assure you that I'll be working very hard to serve our State's consumers and businesses,” said O'Donnell.

In his position at DORA, O'Donnell is taking on the responsibility of regulating and licensing businesses and individuals working as professionals within our State. Divisions within DORA include: Banking, Civil Rights, Insurance, Real Estate, and the Public Utilities Commission.

Governor Owens said, “Rick O'Donnell understands the key role that this agency plays in regulating Colorado business and protecting the consumer. He also understands the importance of a free market. At a time when it is so important to encourage economic growth, we must ensure that government regulations don't stifle the very entrepreneurs who are expanding business and creating jobs.”

O'Donnell is also Director of the Fund for Colorado's Future, a nonprofit charity dedicated to improving student achievement at low-performing public schools. He served on the Commission to Save Open Spaces, Farms and Ranches as well as the state commission examining Internet and medical record privacy issues.



Rick O'Donnell
Executive Director, DORA

A Colorado native, O'Donnell was raised in Evergreen and currently resides in Applewood, where he served on the Board of Trustees of the Jefferson County Public Library System. He is a graduate of Colorado College, and has studied at Boston College and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

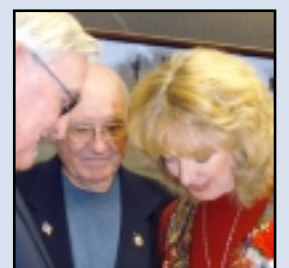
When Jane Norton, then Executive Director of the Department of Public Health and Environment (DPHE), became Governor Owens' running mate last fall, Douglas A. Benevento was named Acting Executive Director. Now that Norton has been elected Lieutenant Governor, Benevento has been officially appointed the new Executive Director.

Benevento was a natural choice for the position as he has served as the department's director of environmental programs since July 1999 and has a strong educational background with a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado, a master's degree from John Hopkins University, and a law degree from the University of Denver.

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“Doug has done an excellent job as director of environmental programs over the past three years. As a result, I feel fully confident that he will exhibit the same kind of expertise and leadership in running the entire department,” said Lieutenant Governor Norton.

Benevento said he “looked forward to serving as executive director because of the strong foundation that Jane Norton established.” As head of the DPHE, Benevento will oversee various state programs such as health facilities licensure and certification; health promotion; maternal, child, adolescent, and women’s health issues, along with environmental programs including hazardous waste and solid waste management and pollution prevention.

Taking over the helm at the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is Jeff Wells, who has served as deputy executive director of the department since 1999. Prior to his tenure at DOLE, Wells worked as a Deputy County Attorney and served in the State Senate from 1983 to 1999. Twelve of the sixteen years he was in the State Senate, his fellow legislators elected him Senate Majority Leader, the longest



Doug Benevento
Executive Director,
DPHE

unbroken period any legislator has held that office in Colorado history.

“In our current economy, labor and employment issues are vital to many Coloradans,” said Governor Owens. “Jeff Wells’ experience as Executive Director, DOLE deputy director of the Labor Department, coupled with the years he served as Senate Majority Leader, will help him make a substantive contribution to the department and, most importantly, to the people it serves.

DOLE is responsible for unemployment services such as matching prospective employees with available jobs, providing unemployment benefits, unemployment insurance and workers compensation. The department also oversees labor and public safety programs.



Jeff Wells
Executive Director, DOLE

“During my tenure as deputy executive director, timeliness and productivity have been among my top priorities. As executive director, these will continue to be my priorities as we strive to find new employment opportunities for Coloradans,” Wells said.

STATE EMPLOYEE HONORED BY BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

By MSgt. Deborah Smith
Deputy State Public Affairs Officer,
Colorado National Guard

When Vickie Olson accepted the position as Director of Admissions at the Colorado State Veterans Center at Homelake in 1998, she didn’t know much about veterans. But by the three Medal of Honor recipients and approximately 50 guests that crowded into the small conference room to present her with the State Board of Veterans Affairs Dedicated Service Award, you would have never guessed she was a novice.

“I learned about our veterans through their stories,” said a tearful Olson. “For each of our residents, discharge papers are required and it is through these documents I learned of their incredible stories and sacrifice.”

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Olson was honored at a ceremony hosted by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.
Photo courtesy of MSgt Deborah Smith



The very nature of work and the workplace have dramatically changed over the past 25 years. Many of us remember carbon copies, mimeographs, typewriters, white out, and rolling files, days when “snail-mail” was communication, and a phrase like “close enough for government work” may have been acceptable. These days it’s word processing, PowerPoint, email, integrated systems, and the world at our desktops. It’s flex-time, telecommuting, and doing more with less. The individual worker now expects more control over his or her career, and employers expect more out of their employees.

As the workplace has changed, so too has the role of human resources, becoming more of a strategic partner in defining best-practice approaches to changing business needs. In his December *Stateline* column, DPA Executive Director Troy Eid essentially asks, how can the State of Colorado build a workforce to meet the changing demands of the 21st century? What does our workforce look like today, what do we want it to be in the future and what stands in our way of implementing this vision? The column also outlines several key issues – an aging workforce, an increasing number of retirements and retirement eligible workers, downsizing and decreased budgets, outdated systems, and the loss of institutional knowledge.

The DPA Division of Human Resources (DHR) is currently exploring the feasibility of working directly on the following strategic workforce initiatives – succession planning, the implementation of a total compensation philosophy, improved benefits programs, merit-based advancement, broadbanding, pooled leave, and outsourcing transactional business – that will help empower employees to have more choice and personal accountability, give managers greater flexibility, and enable the State to enhance its total investment in the workforce.

HR CONCEPTS TO HELP MOVE US INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

BY JEFF SCHUTT
DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES, DPA

Succession Planning

While there is not one precise meaning, in general terms it is how an employer sets its vision and goals for the workforce of the future, and then plans for and implements that vision. We must adequately prepare for the loss of institutional knowledge, and properly train our current talent to assume leadership positions. We also have to rethink how we attract new employees and retain top talent. With a soft economy the demand may not seem so imperative; however, when the economy turns around, the hunt for good talent will again become fiercely competitive.

Implementing Total Compensation

Total compensation is the allocation of human resources dollars the employer invests in recruiting, motivating, and retaining the very best workforce. Components may include fixed pay – base salary; variable pay, such as performance pay, incentives, discretionary pay or premiums; group insurances (health, dental, life, AD&D), disability; leave, retirement, employee training/education; and work-life programs. Under a true total compensation approach, individual employees have more control in creating the right mix of components to meet their distinct needs and the State can enhance its investment in the workforce.

Improved Benefits Programs

The State as an employer must offer adequate and affordable coverage. We can point our fingers until they fall off, but we must try different approaches. Exploring pilot programs, self-funding, and defined contribution plans will be part of the solution. Implementing our total compensation philosophy will provide even greater flexibility so that the State can better respond to the market and employees can choose a program that best meets their needs.

Merit-Based Advancement

A key to recruiting and retaining new employees and top talent is to provide opportunity for rapid advancement. Performance management and a sound performance-based pay system help create that pathway.

Broadbanding

DHR has been working for over a decade to consolidate classes and add flexibility to the classification system. Broadbanding, the grouping of existing classes into few, broad classes with wider pay ranges, takes this approach one step further by shifting the emphasis away from job classes and moving it more toward work performance. This allows managers much greater flexibility in providing advancement opportunities for high achievers and complements performance-based pay.

Pooled Leave

Pooled leave consolidates hours traditionally kept in separate accounts – annual leave and sick leave. In essence, pooled leave empowers an employee to make personal decisions regarding leave choices. Just as employees would not want the State telling them how to spend their paycheck, pooled leave allows employees to spend their leave based on their needs.

Outsourcing Transactional HR Systems

We must address our information technology systems, systems that were adequate when they were originally built, but simply cannot provide the timely data that decision makers need immediately. Four years ago when we had record surpluses it was unreasonable to ask the General Assembly to fund (against many competing needs) the \$60 million dollars to update our systems; it is entirely inconceivable to ask for the money today given the current fiscal situation.

Who we will be tomorrow will depend upon the difficult choices we make today, and whether we can use our current challenging situation as the opportunity to find innovative solutions. Exploring these concepts and implementing those that make the best business sense will help forge a better tomorrow. In the months to come, we will provide more detail on the ones that do make sound business sense to implement.



CAPITOL SAFETY PROJECT ROLLS AHEAD THANKS TO COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By TROY A EID
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DPA

unexpected but refreshing opportunity to reexamine how state government does business. Our challenge as leaders is to seize this opportunity to work together in new and sometimes unorthodox ways to meet the needs of Colorado's citizens.

The recent resuscitation by the Colorado Historical Society of the State Capitol Life-Safety Project is a case in point. The Colorado State Capitol is one of the most (if not *the* most) significant historical building in the state. Yet since its completion in 1903, the fire danger has been so serious that if the building were not currently exempted from Denver city fire codes,



Larry Friedberg
State Architect

improvements to one of Colorado's busiest buildings and most popular tourist attractions.

When budget reductions led to a freeze in state building construction projects, the State Capitol Life-Safety Project was put on hold indefinitely. But instead of giving up, two determined state leaders – State Architect Larry Friedberg and Capitol Complex Manager Ric Conard, both employees of the Department of Personnel & Administration (DPA) – approached the Colorado Historical Society (CHS) for help.

With support from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and the encouragement of CHS President Georgianna Contiguglia, DPA submitted an application to the Colorado Historical Fund for a \$2.3 million grant to support the Life-Safety Project. This fund receives 28 percent of the tax revenues generated from Colorado's limited-stakes gaming proceeds, which are then dedicated to preserving state historical sites. CHS approved the grant last month.

The history of the State Capitol is inseparable from the story of Colorado. The building itself was designed in 1885 following a competition won by architect Elijah E. Myers of Detroit, Michigan. Myers' design was defined as "the Corinthian order of classic architecture." Construction began in 1886 but was not sufficiently complete to allow occupancy until 1895. In 1897, additional funds were appropriated and Denver architect Frank E. Edbrooke was hired to complete the project. In 1903 the building was finally completed when the dome was finished and gilded with gold.

According to State Architect Friedberg, the Capitol's contents and building materials are virtually irreplaceable and an accurate value is impossible to assess. The artwork, from the paintings and sculptures to the murals and

stained glass work, could never be duplicated. The chief wainscot material is Beulah marble (often referred to as rose onyx) and is no longer available. The craftsmanship could likely be replicated but only at a cost that would stagger the imagination when translated to today's construction dollars.

The ultimate goal of the State Capitol Life-Safety Project is to protect, preserve and maintain the building and its contents while bringing it up to current safety standards. The immediate goal is to protect the buildings inhabitants: The people who work and visit the building on a day-to-day basis. These upgrades are be the first step to assuring that the building is protected for future restoration and improvement projects and that its users and visitors are safe.

The Life-Safety Project began in 1990 but suffered repeated delays over the years. Last June, the Legislature appropriated \$12,727,574 for the project. Before these funds were frozen later in the year, the project achieved some important successes. A sprinkler system has now been installed in the Capitol dome and the sub-basement; an upsized fire pump and piping have



been installed and are now operational; and fire-rated room divisions with firewalls and fire doors have been installed in the sub-basement. A survey has also been completed to determine how best to complete the work with minimal disruption to the building's historic character, particularly given that the Capitol will be occupied during the six-year duration of the project.

The CHS grant means that work on the Life-Safety Project will resume this month and will continue through this August – with the possibility that CHS may consider funding later stages of the project through its annual grant-application process. The phase 1 work will include the installation of fire sprinklers and alarms in the attic and the purchase of marble panels for extending the building's four stairwells (which will be completed in future phases). These stairways currently extend from the third floor to the second floor, where they dead-end, and pose the most serious threat to escaping the building during a fire.

Additional project phases will include installing fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, a public address



Ric Conard in the Capitol sub-basement.

system, exit signage and emergency power throughout the entire State Capitol building. The entire project will take six years contingent on continued funding.

Future generations of Coloradans can thank Larry Friedberg, Ric Conard, CCHE and the

Colorado Historical Society for helping make the Colorado State Capitol a safer place to work and visit. These talented state employees remind us that even in challenging times, real leaders know how to turn lemons into lemonade.

As Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration, Troy A. Eid is the chief administrative

officer for Colorado's \$13.8 billion state government.



THE GOVERNOR'S STAR AWARDS

Nominations are now being accepted for the Governor's State Top Achievement Recognition (STAR) Awards. All State employees are eligible. Nominations forms can be found at www.state.co.us/dpa/, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "The Governor's 2003 STAR Awards."

The award ceremony will be held Thursday, May 8th at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Denver.

VETERANS, from p. 2
Olson becomes the first state employee and first woman to achieve the distinguished honor, and the department's fourth recipient.

Flanked by Medal of Honor recipients Capt. Raymond G. Murphy, Cpl. Hiroshi Miyamura and Pvt. George T. Sakato, Olson was cited for her dedication and compassion for veterans throughout not only Colorado, but northern New Mexico as well.

In addition to the countless military parades, Memorial Day celebrations and the preservation of military memorabilia, Olson's most noted accomplishment was the organization of a ceremony to honor New Mexico Medal of Honor recipient Pfc. Jose Valdez of Gobernador, New Mexico. Although born and raised in New Mexico, Valdez enlisted in the U.S. Army in Utah, and was only recognized as a Medal of Honor recipient by Utah. Olson helped bring the honor home to Valdez's birthplace.

Olson has gained an in-depth understanding of what veterans endure through her association with the State Veterans Center and its residents.

"Vickie is not only a great friend and advocate for Colorado veterans," said her citation, "but she demonstrates the absolute highest quality in Colorado civil service employees."

CSECU COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL FOOD DRIVE

Colorado State Employees Credit Union (CSECU) recently held its annual food drive benefiting the Colorado State Employee Assistance Program (C-SEAP). The food drive was highly successful with a grand total of 1,300 bags of groceries and \$1,700 in monetary donations collected.

All contributions go to state employees and their families in need of assistance. Donations aid state employees in crisis by providing them with short-term assistance.

Thank you to all that contributed and remember donations can be made year round. To send a donation, make your check payable to C-SEAP and drop it off at any CSECU location; or send it to CSECU, Attn: C-SEAP Donation, 1390 Logan Street, Denver, CO 80203.

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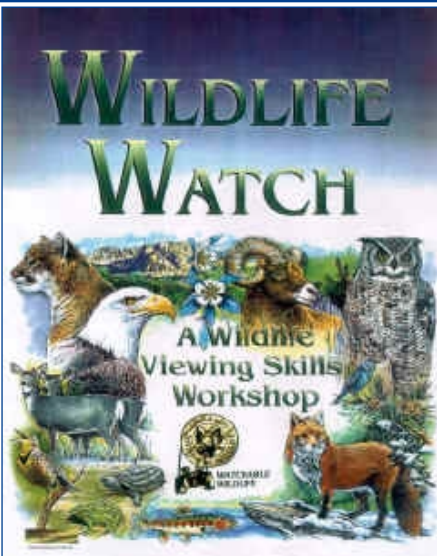
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Wildlife Watch is a wildlife viewing skills workshop designed by the Watchable Wildlife program of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources. **State employees and family members** (adults and children over 12) are invited to attend any workshop **free of charge!** Participants need to register for Wildlife Watch hotline online or by phone. The workshop dates, times and places are detailed on both the Web site and phone line. When you sign-up, be sure to let us know that you are a state employee and tell us how many are coming. Either four or eight hours in length, each Wildlife Watch workshop culminates with a group field trip where participants can try out their newfound skills at a local park or open space. Public workshops are held regularly at various sites statewide.

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|---------|--|
| Feb. 8 | LITTLETON, Carson Nature Center, 7301 S. Platte River Pkwy., 9am - 1 pm, RSVP 303-291-7258 |
| Feb. 9 | AURORA, Plains Conservation Center, 21901 E. Hampden, 9am - 1pm. RSVP 303-690-8536 |
| Feb. 22 | COLORADO SPRGS, Beidleman Environmental Cntr, 740 W. Caramillo, 9am - 1pm, RSVP 719-227-5207 |
| Mar. 1 | LITTLETON, Chatfield Nature Preserve, 8500 Deer Creek Canyon Rd., 9am - 1pm, RSVP 303-291-7258 |
| Mar. 8 | LITTLETON, Carson Nature Center, 7301 S. Platte River Pkwy., 9am - 1pm, RSVP 303-291-7258 |
| Mar. 9 | BOULDER, Chautauqua Community House, 900 Baseline, Boulder, 9am - 1pm, RSVP 303-449-8849 |

Register on line at www.wildlifewatch.net
or by phone: **303- 291-7250**

Stateside MattHolman



"Stay away from her, Clyde. She's a free range chicken."



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